

WASHINGTON, D.C. - By a vote of 222 to 203, the United States House of Representatives today passed H.R. 2, the so-called "Jobs and Growth Tax Act of 2003."

Representative Xavier Becerra (CA - 31), the only congressional member from Southern California on the House Ways and Means Committee, voted against the irresponsible tax plan citing that it does nothing to help the unemployed and mortgages our nation's future with crippling deficit spending.

During today's debate on H.R. 2, Rep. Becerra issued the following statement:

"It is my hope today that this body would invoke a spirit of shared sacrifice - our enlisted men and women have done it, as they have been willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice on the field of battle. And yet I wonder where the sacrifice is in this bill. It asks nothing of the wealthiest Americans, instead giving them a huge tax cut rather than helping those returning soldiers with tax relief or creating jobs for the millions of hard working Americans who are unemployed. Knowing that our economy is hemorrhaging 75,000 jobs per month, it is time the House of Representatives recognizes the simple fact that we need jobs, not deficits, and a \$550 billion tax cut will blow up the bank.

"This bill costs too much while doing too little, and is a disappointing and problematic pay-you-later approach to government budgeting. H.R. 2 is trickle down economics at its worst, as its so-called benefits simply

will not make it down to help most Americans. However, the flood of federal debt left in this bill's wake will negatively affect everyone.

"We are investing billions in Iraq to build new schools, new roads, and new infrastructure. But this is done without the same commitment to the needs of our states and cities. Passage of this bill will force the federal government to continue to starve these jurisdictions.

"Deficits do matter. Our children will pay for this tax cut. This government should not shortchange the many Americans who have too little, while providing a tax cut to the few who have more than enough."

H.R. 2 is a 10-year \$550 billion package that centers on lowering the tax rate on dividends and most capital gains to 15 percent. Given the ever-increasing federal deficit, Rep. Becerra believes that the United States Congress should not be broaching tax cut packages as large as these.